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BYE-2358-64

19 February 1964

STATUS REPORT

1. Nine OXCART A-12 CIA reconnaissance aircraft currently are in flight test at [REDACTED] (One crashed on 24 May 1963.) The remaining three CIA A-12 aircraft, numbers 131, 132, and 133, are scheduled for delivery to the test site on 19 February, 4 March, and 18 March respectively. The three AF-12 aircraft (LRI's) have all been delivered to the site and two are in flight status. The third is in final assembly. The first Air Force R-12 (reconnaissance) aircraft is scheduled for delivery August 1964 with five subsequent R-12's to be delivered one each in October and December 1964, and January, February, and March 1965. In addition, the 14th and 15th A-12 are being reconfigured to carry the TAGBOARD drone vehicle and these two aircraft are scheduled for delivery in July and August 1964.

2. Since the first flight of a CIA OXCART A-12 aircraft, 26 April 1962, 642 flights, totaling 868:21 flight hours, have been made as of 18 February 1964, utilizing a total of ten aircraft at the test site in Nevada. Of these totals, 298 flights totaling 330:16 hours were conducted with aircraft having two J-58 engines installed. The only aircraft not now using the J-58 engine is the dual-place trainer and it will eventually be retrofitted with J-58 engines.

3. To date the longest CIA A-12 aircraft flight has been 3:10 hours, the highest speed achieved has been Mach 3.27, and the highest altitude has been 83,000 feet. On 3 February 1964, the aircraft flew at Mach 3.2 and 83,000 feet altitude for 10 minutes which represented the longest sustained flight at the design conditions. Minor effects due to the high temperatures were encountered; however, they were in the areas where components not designed for high temperatures had not yet been replaced. Replacement of these components is now underway. In addition, a variable by-pass area is being installed at the engine face to improve performance during such transients as shock expulsion and engine out operation.

4. The aircraft, engines, and other critical components, including the inertial navigation system, stability augmentation system, autopilot, air induction system, pilot environment equipment, cameras and side-looking high resolution radar systems, all specifically developed for the program, are continuing to perform reasonably well within the limits of testing so far in the flight test program.

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5. CIA A-12 aircraft camera systems IA and IB (Perkin-Elmer) are currently in flight test status showing gradual improvements due to retrofits being incorporated. System IC (Perkin-Elmer) is scheduled for delivery to the Area, 15 February 1964. Two Type II camera systems (Eastman-Kodak) are also in flight test status having demonstrated design goals within the limits of airspeed and altitude flown to date. Although more than fifty photographic test flights have been conducted, significant proof of the camera capabilities must await higher speeds and altitude.

6. To date five OXCART CIA A-12 aircraft, including the two place trainer, are assigned to the operational Detachment Commander and are being flown by the Detachment pilots. Two of the remaining three CIA A-12 aircraft to be delivered will also be turned over to the Detachment, probably within one month after arrival at the test site. These aircraft are being used extensively for training of the operational pilots.

7. Although four of the A-12 aircraft are assigned to flight test and are flown by Lockheed pilots, all aircraft are owned by the Government.

8. Late summer 1964 has been estimated as a limited operational readiness capability for CIA's A-12 aircraft. January 1965 has been estimated as a full-fledged operational readiness capability for CIA's A-12 aircraft.

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